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ABSTRACT

This document examines the role of the aide in a Title I program as she is perceived by the children of that program. It presents a general summary of findings, a sample questionnaire given the children, and data from taped interviews with interpretive remarks by the author. (JB)

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PERCEPTION OF THE TEACHER AIDE'S ROLE

A CHILD'S VIEW

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PERCEPTION OF THE TEACHER AIDE'S ROLE:
A CHILD'S VIEW

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Since 1965 the Carroll County School system has utilized teacher aides to bolster the educational services provided to elementary children with the greatest educational deficits. Although some aides have been assigned to programs such as Headstart, adult education, and special education, most of the aides have worked with children in grades 1-6.

An integral part of the Title I and Headstart programs each year has been the evaluation of the teacher aide program through the use of a check sheet. A locally devised check sheet was filled in by the principal and an identical one was completed by the teacher. The fifty-one item check sheet secured data on the aide program rather than the individual aide.

An interesting outcome of the use of this evaluation procedure has been the high degree of positive correlation of responses by the aide, teacher and principal. In addition, very infrequently was there any indication that the aide program was not operating in a highly desirable manner, at least as indicated by the check sheets and other collected data.

During the 1971-72 year it was felt that the direct recipient of aide services, the child, might be a good source of information about those things which the teacher aide actually did with children. Consequently, it was hypothesized that a questionaire could be constructed which would elicit responses from children and those responses would describe the functioning of the aide from the child's viewpoint. A comparison of the children's responses with local expectations of what the aide should be doing could then be made, thus strengthening the evaluation of the Title I and Headstart services to children.

Following a study of all locally produced documents pertaining to the role of the Title I teacher aide, a schedule of questions was written and forty-eight children served by sixteen aides were interviewed.

The following are summary statements based upon pupil responses.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF PUPIL RESPONSES

In a general sense, Carroll County Headstart and elementary school pupils in classrooms served by teacher aides, viewed the aide as:

1. Being someone who assisted children who had specific instructional needs in the classroom.
2. Being someone who was generally helpful to children.
3. Being a person who would read to him (usually in a whole-class setting), and would take him out to play.
4. Possessing a personality which made the aide approachable both in school and out of school.
5. Being accesible to the child on an individual basis.

In contrast to other reports from teachers and some administrators, the pupils did not view the aide as a person who:

1. Operates the duplicator (Note: Only two of the 48 pupils knew what a spirits duplicator was, this in spite of the fact that teachers consistently say that use of the duplicator is one of the most valuable tasks performed by the aide. Note also that duplicators are typically located in school offices.)
2. Operates the movie projector. (For example 68% of the pupils said that the aide did not show movies. In great part this is explained away by the fact that large numbers of children themselves operate projection equipment in Carroll County elementary classrooms.)
3. Helps children do "make-up" work.

4. The person who performs minor first aid treatment, nor renders assistance should the child become ill at school.

5. The person who gives permission to go to the toilet.

PART II: PROCEDURES

Construction of Question Schedule

Criteria Established

Criteria to be used in developing questions to be asked in interviews were developed by the Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs and the Supervisor of Teacher Aides, Title I, ESEA. It was agreed that acceptable questions were:

1. To be relevant to those tasks assigned to aides.

2. To be answerable by any child in any program in which an aide worked.

3. To focus upon the instructional aspects of the aide's role.

4. To be precise enough to secure answers to specific items, but flexible enough to allow pupil elaboration if there were an inclination for the child to proceed past simple responses to questions.

5. To be acceptable to the aide, teacher and principal.

6. To elict indications of pupil attitude toward school generally and toward the aide.

Tryout of Schedule. A set of questions was written according to the above stated criteria. The schedule was tried out with six children from two schools under procedures to be used in the main effort. A committee composed of two teacher aides, two teachers, one principal, and the Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs agreed to modifications which resulted in the schedule used in the main effort, and a copy of the schedule follows.

A GUIDE TO QUESTIONS ASKED OF PUPILS SERVED BY TEACHER AIDES

(tape record all questions and responses)

I. Identifying Data (record essential data, establish rapport)

A. What is your name?
B. What is your teacher's name?

(Make sure rapport has been established before proceeding.)

II. Attitude (general attitude)

A. What is the nicest thing about school?
B. Is there anything about school you would like to change?

III. Child's view of the Aide

A. If you hurt your finger, who would doctor it?

B. If you get sick at school, who would help you?

C. If you can't read a word, who wuld help you? (Tailor this to whatever curriculum area the aide works in with the child.)

D. If you have to go to the bathroom, who gives you permission?

E. Do you have a telephone? Would you call Mrs. _____ (aide) at home if you needed information?

F. If your teacher had to be out of the room, and you needed help with something, who would you ask for help?

G. If you missed some work because you were absent, who would help you do make-up work?

H. Tell me some things Mrs. _____(aide) does with you. Does she work with just you by yourself sometimes?

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A Guide....(continued)

I. Does Mrs. _____ ever do something for another pupil that you wish she would do for you?

J. Does Mrs. _____ read to you? once a week ___ daily_____ how often?_____

K. Does Mrs._____play records,_____show movies _____run the duplicator_____

L. Does Mrs._____ take you out to play? _____

M. Does Mrs. _____ eat lunch with you?

SELECTION OF TEACHER AIDES AND PUPILS

To arrive at a generalized view of the functioning of the teacher aide, as viewed by the pupils served, it was necessary that care be exercised in selection of the aides and then, subsequently, of those schildren served by the aide.

Selection of Aides. By lot, one aide was selected from each Title I, ESEA impact school. To this list was added aides who worked in special education (EMR) and Headstart classes. Because of the variety of organizational patterns in elementary schools and the administrative staffing patterns of some schools, as well as school size, adjustments were made to represent the various categories by simply adding other aides. The final list contained the names of 16 aides to be representative of the 47 aides in instructional service in Carroll County elementary schools and Headstart centers note that more aides serve primary grades than any other category of children, thus representation, as expected is larger. The distribution of aides by school and program follows.

TABLE I: TEACHER AIDE REPRESENTATION

School	Phy. Ed.	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6	Head-Start	Spec. Ed.	Combined Principalship
Oakland			1		1	
Dugspur			1			yes
St. Paul*					1	
Mt. Bethel		1				yes
Gladesboro		1	1			yes
Hillsville		1				
Laurel Fork	1					yes
Vaughan*		1				
Sylvatus			1			yes
Laurel		1				
Fancy Gap		1				yes
Hillsville Intermediate				1**		
Woodlawn*				1		
Lambsburg		1				yes
	1	7	4	2	2	

* Indicates 1-9 organizational patterns.

** Headstart is housed separately from the Intermediate School (grades 7-9).

Selection of Pupils. It was arbitrarily decided that responses from three pupils served by each of the selected sixteen teacher aides would provide adequate data. To locate the three children, the interviewer selected the second, fourth, and sixth names from the respective rolls of children served by each of the aides.

Interview Procedure. At an appointed time, the interviewer appeared at the school, checked in with the principal, and sought out the aide as she worked. The purpose of the interview was explained to the aide. The interviewer requested that the second, fourth, and sixth child on the 1971-72 Title I, ESEA list or Headstart roll be brought by the aide for the interview. The children were brought, introduced to the interviewer by the aide and then interviewed, one-by-one, and responses were tape recorded.

In each case the aide set up the place for the interview and remained nearby (out of sight) for a post-interview conference. The tapes of the three interviews were played back with the aide, the teacher and principal, and additional information was frequently provided. In a few cases, aide and teacher schedules did not allow a post-interview session.

PART III: DATA FROM TAPED INTERVIEWS

Data from the forty-eight taped interviews were compiled and the fourteen items which deal directly with the teacher aide are given below. Note the designations "aide" and "another aide." The distinction is that though each child was assigned to an aide, another aide might perform a function for the child.

EXHIBIT I: PUPIL RESPONSES ABOUT AIDE ACTIVITIES

1. Who would doctor a hurt finger?

	Pupil responses		percent	
teacher	20		41	
nurse, doctor, hospital	10		21	
Aide	10	15	21	31
another Aide	5		10	
secretary	3		7	
Total Responses	48		100%	

2. If sick at school, who would help?

	Pupil responses		percent	
teacher	23		47	
Aide	5	9	10	19
another Aide	4		9	
nurse, doctor, hospital	4		9	
mother or another person from home	4		9	
secretary	2		4	
lies down in clinic	2		4	
did not specify	2		4	
principal	1		2	
nobody	1		2	
Total Responses	48		100%	

3. Who helps on specific school task?

	pupil responses		percent	
teacher	30		62	
Aide	11	12	22	25
pupil	5		10	
another Aide	1		3	
nobody	1		3	
Total Responses	48		100%	

4. Who gives permission to go to the bathroom?

	pupil responses	percent
teacher	41	85
Aide	6	12
a request is not required	1	3
	48	100%

-continued-

Exhibit I; (continued)

5. Have telephone?

	pupil responses	percent
yes	24	48
no	1	2
	25	50%

6. Who helps when the teacher is out of the room?

	pupil responses	percent
Aide	16	33
another pupil	15	31
another Aide	9	18
did not make response	3	6
nobody	3	6
principal	1	3
another teacher	1	3
Total Response	48	100%

(16 + 15 + 9 = 25; 33 + 31 + 18 = 51)

7. Who helps with "make-up" work?

	pupil responses	percent
teacher	22	45
Aide	8	16
"make-up" work not expected	8	16
another Aide	3	7
another pupil	3	7
nobody	3	7
mother	1	2
Total Responses	48	100%

(8 + 8 + 3 = 11; 16 + 16 + 7 = 23)

-continued-

Exhibit I; (continued)

8. Things the aide does with the child.

	pupil responses	percent
read	19	27
arithmetic	5	9
spelling	5	9
works with me in skills center	4	8
helps the teacher	2	4
physical education	2	4
stations in physical education	2	4
looks at books	2	4
pronounce words	1	1
learn new words	1	1
with language	1	1
phonics	1	1
writing	1	1
paste, cut, color	1	1
print	1	1
work books	1	1
games	1	1
writes my name	1	1
works with me	1	1
is nice to me	1	1
cleans up room	1	1
runs off tests	1	1
helps when the teacher is gone	1	1
checks papers	1	1
takes us out to play	1	1
uses language master	1	1
finds books for me	1	1
shows film	1	1
shows t.v.	1	1
plays records	1	1
takes me home	1	1
word cards	1	1
post office	1	1
puts me on mat	1	1
puts me on bus	1	1
goes to lunch with me	1	1
fixes things	1	1
take walks	1	1
stays in with me	1	1
	72	100

Total Responses

(continued)

Exhibit I (continued)

9. Does the aide work with child by himself?

	pupil responses	percent
yes	29	60
no	19	40
Total Responses	48	100%

10. Does the aide do something for another pupil you wish she would do for you? (child was asked to name those activities)

	pupil responses	percent
no	31	64
yes	17	36
Total Responses	48	100%

Examples pupils gave:
let me tell words
let me play records
let me get up from the mat
help me with reading
put me with my friend
teach me to pitch
help me with words

11. Does the aide read to you? How often?

	pupil responses	percent
three days a week (Mon., Wed., Fri.)	18	37
daily	16	33
no	12	25
once a week	2	5
Total Response	48	100%

-continued-

Exhibit I (continued)

12. Does the aide .....

		pupil responses	percent
play records?	yes	27	56
	no	21	44
Total Responses		48	100%
show movies?	no	33	68
	yes	15	32
Total Responses		48	100%
run duplicator?	yes	3	6
	no	45	94
Total Responses		48	100%

13. Does the aide take you out to play?

	pupil responses		percent	
yes	25		52	
teacher takes child out to play	15	33	31	69
another Aide takes child out to play	8		17	
Total Responses	48		100%	

14. Does the aide eat lunch with pupil?

	pupil responses		percent	
teacher eats with child	23		48	
another Aide	10	23	28	48
yes	13		20	
other children	2		4	
Total Responses	48		100%	

INTERPRETATIVE REMARKS

1. Aides were viewed positively by the children. For example, there were only two instances in which aides were said by children to have functioned as a disciplinarian.

2. Aides did not do some things as frequently, when compared to teacher, as might be generally expected. For example, it is interesting to note that when a teacher was out of the classroom for a short period of time, 31% of the children saw another pupil as his helper while 52% looked upon the teacher aide as the helper.

   When a child is required to make up work missed because of school absence, the teacher was twice as likely to help the child to do the make-up as was the teacher aide.

3. Thirty-one percent of the pupils said that the aide would help him if he hurt his finger, while 20% would receive the attention of the teacher.

   Forty-seven of the pupils said that the teacher would help if the child became ill at school, while 19% indicated that it would be the aide who helped.

4. Children were asked to enumerate specific things done with them as individuals by the aide. Forty-eight children interviewed gave 72 separate responses. The quality of the responses was interesting in that the children were aware of aide help, and they greatly desired it. This interviewer was impressed by the fact that each child could name several things done for him by the aide.

5. A very high porportion of the activities engaged in by the aide with the child fell into the categories of teaching of reading, and physical education; two areas of Title I emphasis for the year. For example, when asked for specific things done for the individual child, 51% of the pupils said the aide read to the child or conducted some other activity which was definitely in the category of assisting in reading. Also, there were numerous statements that aides helped in various aspects of physical education.

6. Sixty-eight percent of the interviewed children specified that it was an aide who took them out to play.

These generalizations have been drawn from the data collected in taped interviews with 48 children in Carroll County and they seem to confirm other data which expresses feelings that Carroll County teacher aides were accepted in a positive and wholesome manner by the children during the 1971-72 school year. The pupils confirmed that aides worked in specific areas of reading and physical education as required by the Title I ESEA proposal.

There were but slight indications that the aide ever functioned in the role of disciplinarian.

END

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